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**STUDY OF MONOPROPELLANTS  
FOR ELECTROTHERMAL THRUSTERS****DESIGN AND FABRICATION TASK SUMMARY REPORT**

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JANUARY 1974

INTERIM REPORT  
FOR PERIOD MAY - JULY 1973

Prepared for  
GODDARD SPACE FLIGHT CENTER  
Greenbelt, Maryland 20771

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16. Abstract The objective of the "Study of Monopropellants for Electrothermal Thrusters" program is to determine the feasibility of operating small thrust level electrothermal thrusters with monopropellants other than MIL-grade hydrazine. The work scope includes analytical study, design and fabrication of demonstration thrusters, and an evaluation test program wherein monopropellants with freezing points lower than MIL-grade hydrazine are evaluated and characterized to determine their applicability to electrothermal thrusters for spacecraft attitude control. Five demonstration thrusters were fabricated to determine the feasibility of operation with monomethylhydrazine, Aerozine-50, 77 percent hydrazine-23 percent hydrazine azide, and TRW formulated mixture of hydrazine monopropellants (MHM) consisting of 35 percent hydrazine-50 percent monomethylhydrazine-15 percent ammonia. The thruster design was based on the Electrothermal Hydrazine Thruster (EHT) developed by TRW for NASA/GSFC on NASA Contract No. NASS-11477(1). The present thruster is designed to produce a steady-state thrust level of 0.344 N at $1.724 \times 10^6$ N/m <sup>2</sup> feed pressure. Vacuum specific impulse goals were set at 1961 N-s/kg steady-state and 1716 N-s/kg pulsed-mode (0.050 second to steady state.)		
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## PREFACE

The objective of the "Study of Monopropellants for Electrothermal Thrusters" program is to determine the feasibility of operating small thrust level electrothermal thrusters with monopropellants other than MIL-grade hydrazine. The work scope includes analytical study, design and fabrication of demonstration thrusters, and an evaluation test program wherein monopropellants with freezing points lower than MIL-grade hydrazine are evaluated and characterized to determine their applicability to electrothermal thrusters for spacecraft attitude control.

Five demonstration thrusters were fabricated to determine the feasibility of operation with monomethylhydrazine, Aerozine-50, 77 percent hydrazine-23 percent hydrazine azide, and TRW formulated mixture of hydrazine monopropellants (MHM) consisting of 35 percent hydrazine-50 percent monomethylhydrazine-15 percent ammonia. The thruster design was based on the Electrothermal Hydrazine Thruster (EHT) developed by TRW for NASA/GSFC on NASA contract number NAS5-11477<sup>(1)</sup>. The present thruster is designed to produce a steady-state thrust level of 0.344 N at  $1.724 \times 10^6$  N/m<sup>2</sup> feed pressure. Vacuum specific impulse goals were set at 1961 N-s/kg steady-state and 1716 N-s/kg pulsed-mode (0.050 second to steady state).

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## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

This report summarizes the design and fabrication of demonstration thrusters in support of the "Study of Monopropellants for Electrothermal Thrusters" program. The design requirements, design rationale and fabrication methods are included in this report.

## 2.0 DESIGN

### 2.1 DESIGN OBJECTIVES

The thruster design was based on the Electrothermal Hydrazine Thruster (EHT) developed by TRW for NASA/GSFC on NASA Contract No. NAS5-11477. The upgraded design and performance requirements are listed below.

1. Thrust:  $0.344 \pm 0.0267\text{N}$  at  $1.724 \text{ MN/m}^2$  nominal feed pressure
2. Vacuum specific impulse: 1961 N-s/kg steady state  
(goals) 1716 N-s/kg pulsed-mode
3. Pulse duration: 0.050 second to steady state
4. Pulse mode duty cycle: that typical for attitude control  
including "wheel dump"
5. Holding power: 5 watts maximum
6. Nominal voltage: 24 to 32 vdc
7. Maximum steady state on-time: 30 hours
8. Total number of pulses:  $3 \times 10^5$
9. Weight: to be determined
10. Size: to be determined

The specific impulse values have been designated as program goals rather than a firm requirement.

## 2.2 DESCRIPTION OF DESIGN

The original electrothermal hydrazine thruster (EHT) upon which the present thruster is based is shown in Figure 1. The EHT design was modified by replacing the braze joint between the thrust chamber and nozzle with a threaded screen pack sleeve arrangement. This design, as illustrated in Figure 2, provides significant cost savings in thruster fabrication and will greatly implement performance optimization during the Evaluation Test Program. The design provides for

1. Component interchangeability
2. Changes in screen pack geometry
3. Changes in characteristic chamber length,  $L^*$ , by varying the screen pack length or nozzle section length, or both
4. Nondestructive inspection, analysis, and cleaning of internal thruster components.

The additional thrust chamber and nozzle block mass associated with the threaded design will reduce the thruster's performance somewhat and increase the times required to reach holding and steady-state temperatures. These losses will be small and will not significantly affect the performance characterization tests performed in this feasibility study.

## 2.3 THRUSTER COMPONENTS

The thruster solenoid valve to be used during the Evaluation Test Program is the Wright Components, Inc. Model No. 15650 valve. This valve was successfully used on NASA/GSFC contract No. NAS5-11477. The injector-to-valve seal is accomplished by a Teflon compression sleeve.

Two 10.2 cm long by 0.114 cm diameter sheathed Aerorod heater elements are used to heat the thrust chamber and nozzle. These heater elements are sized to maintain holding temperatures in excess of 540°C for sea-level operation during portions of the Evaluation Test Program phase. Thruster insulation is provided by wrapping layers of Microquartz felt around the thrust chamber.



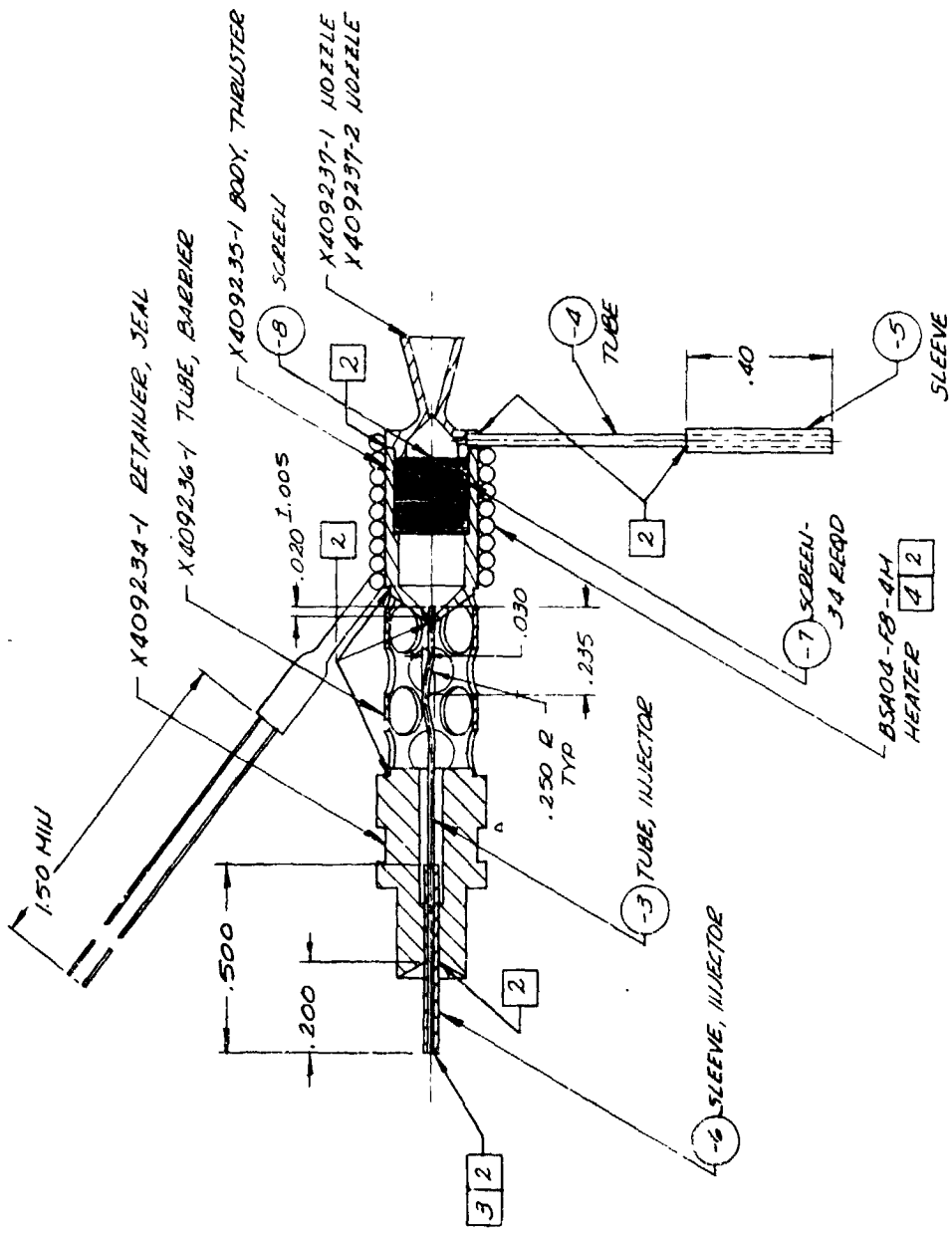


Figure 1. Electrothermal Hydrazine Thruster

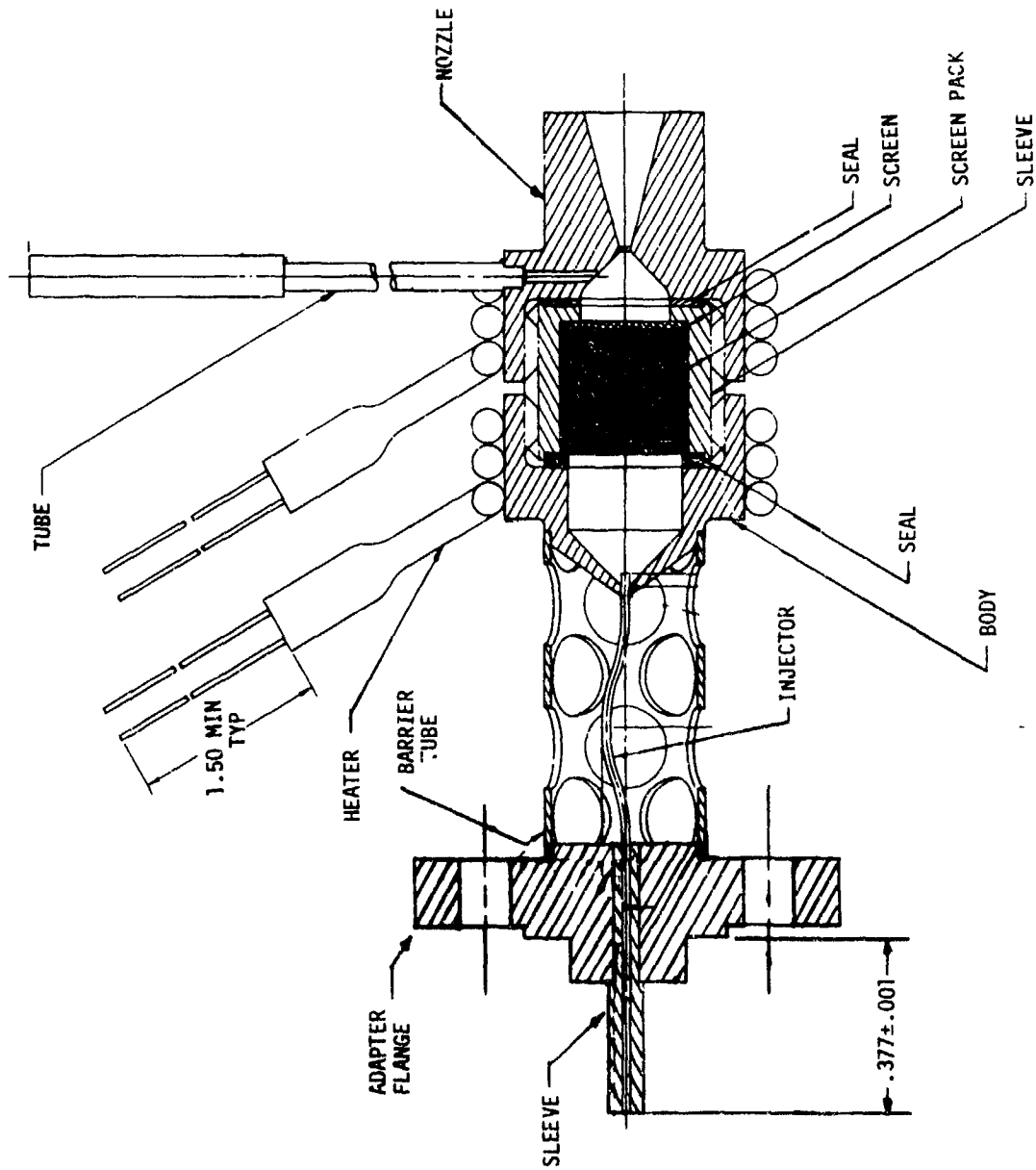


Figure 2. Monopropellant Demonstration Thruster

The nozzle is of standard convergent-divergent design with an area ratio of 50. The throat diameter is 0.046 cm. The screen pack sleeve is sized to accept 0.51 cm diameter platinum screens. The initial sleeve length is 0.51 cm. The chamber head end has a 90° included angle and a tapered wall thickness to limit heat transfer to the injector. The thrust chamber - screen pack - nozzle seals are of thin hardened copper.

The thruster is mated to the Wright Components, Inc. valves through a 0.025 cm thick thermal barrier tube and adapter flange.

Engineering drawings for the various demonstration thruster components are included in Appendix A.

### 3.0 FABRICATION

#### 3.1 THRUSTER COMPONENTS

The fabricated components for five thrusters are shown in Figure 3. Included are the nozzle, screen pack sleeve, body, barrier tube, valve adapter flange and gasket seals. An assembled but not brazed view of the demonstration thruster configuration is presented in Figure 4. The injector tube and two heating elements are missing from Figure 4. All parts were fabricated from Haynes alloy L605 (Haynes 25) with the exception of the adapter flange (Type 304 stainless steel) and the gasket seals (No. 102 copper).

The injector tubes were fabricated from Haynes 25 tubing (0.0356 cm OD by 0.0152 cm ID). All injectors were built with a thermal relief bend rather than a complete loop. The chamber end of the injector was trimmed square and deburred on a jeweler's lathe.

The heater elements were wound in one layer on a mandrel slightly smaller than the outer diameter of the thruster body.

The screen packs were fabricated from 52 mesh platinum gauze and 40 mesh Haynes 25. The platinum screens (60) were punched and pre-compressed by the tooling shown in Figure 5. A single Haynes 25 screen was used as a

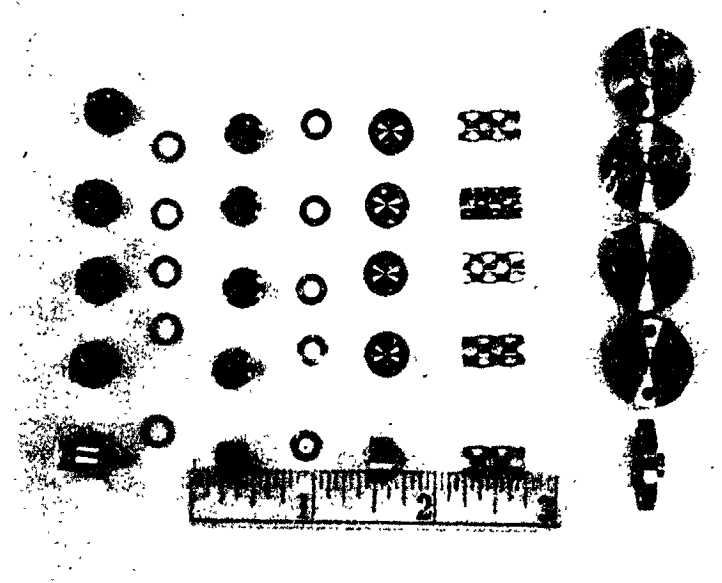


Figure 3. Demonstration Thruster Components



Figure 4. Demonstration Thruster Configuration

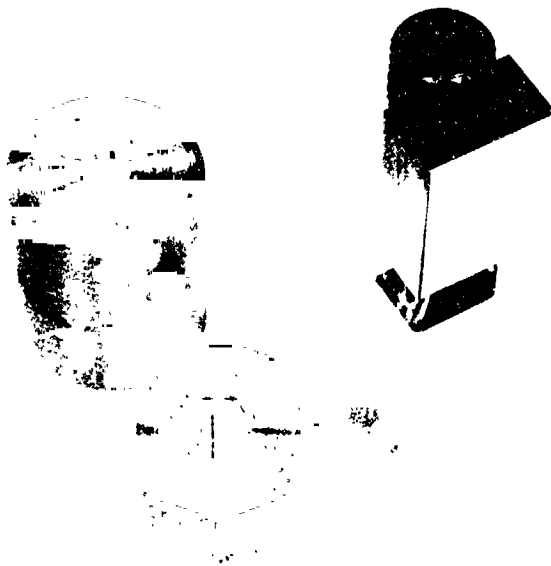


Figure 5. Screen Forming Tooling

retainer for the platinum screen pack. The Haynes 25 retainer was inserted into the screen pack sleeve towards the nozzle end of the thruster. The compacted platinum screen pack was then transferred directly from the compression die into the sleeve.

The split-chamber design allowed the thruster to be assembled in one high-temperature braze cycle. Microbraze alloy 21C was used for the entire assembly. A brazed thruster is shown in Figures 6 and 7 as disassembled and assembled views.

#### 4.0 NEW TECHNOLOGY

The modular design of the monopropellant demonstration thruster described in Section 2.2 of this report has resulted in substantial fabrication cost savings and will enhance technical efforts during the Evaluation Test Program phase. The design is novel in electrothermal hydrazine thruster technology.

#### 5.0 PROGRAM FOR THE EVALUATION TEST TASK

A detailed plan for the Evaluation Test Task of the Study of Monopropellants for Electrothermal Thrusters was submitted as Appendix B of the Analytical Task Summary Report<sup>(2)</sup>.

#### 6.0 CONCLUSIONS

The fabricated thruster assemblies will allow the rapid evaluation and characterization of monopropellants with freezing points lower than MIL-grade hydrazine. The design permits changes in the internal thrust chamber geometry in order to accommodate the different combustion characteristics of the monopropellants to be used during the Evaluation Test Task of this program.

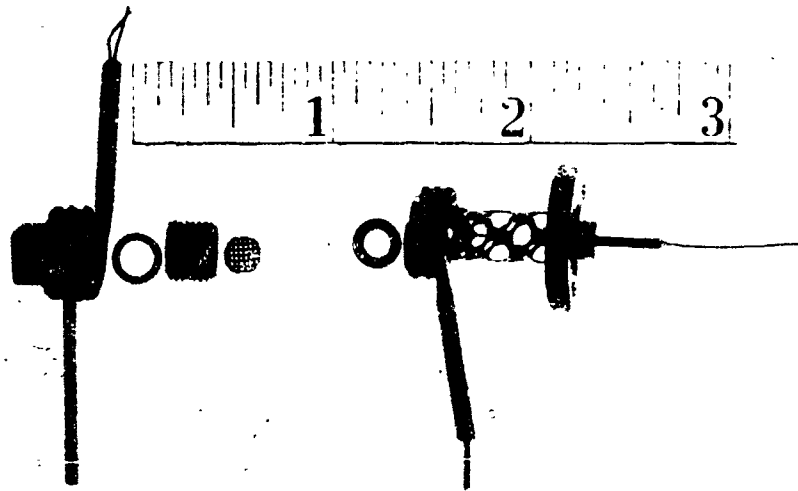


Figure 6. Disassembled Demonstration Thruster

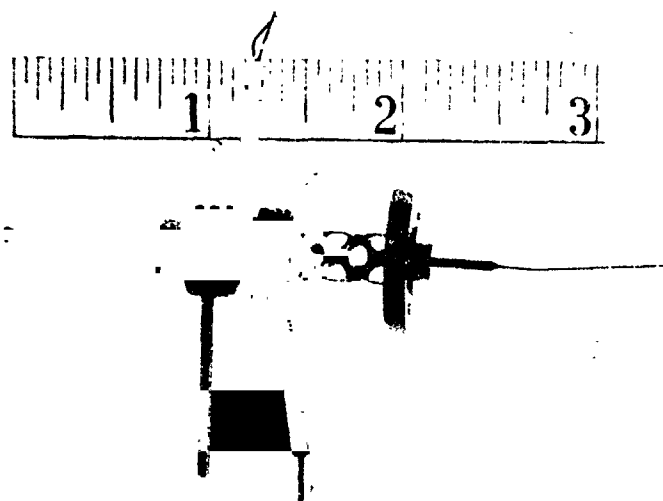


Figure 7. Assembled Demonstration Thruster

## 7.0 REFERENCES

1. Monopropellant Hydrazine Resistojet, Engineering Model Fabrication and Test Task Summary Report, TRW Document 20266-6024-R0-00, March 1973.
2. J. D. Kuenzly and Rein Grabbi, Study of Monopropellants for Electrothermal Thrusters, Analytical Task Summary Report, TRW Document 22409-6010-RU-00, December 1973.



## APPENDIX A

A complete set of monopropellant demonstration thruster drawings is included in this appendix.

(1) Gasket	X412586-1
(1) Gasket-Screen Pack	X412582-1
(1) Body, Monopropellant Demonstration Thruster	X412581-1
(1) Sleeve-Threaded, Monopropellant Demonstration Thruster	X412579-1
(1) Nozzle, Monopropellant Demonstration Thruster	X412578-1
(1) Tube, Barrier-EHT	X409236-1
(60) Screen	X412580-15
(1) Screen	X412580-14
(1) Sleeve	X412580-13
(1) Tube	X412580-12
(1) Tube	X412580-11
(1) Plate, Seal-EHT	X409383-1
(1) Seal, Tube-EHT	X410563-1
(1) Sleeve, Injector	X409240-9

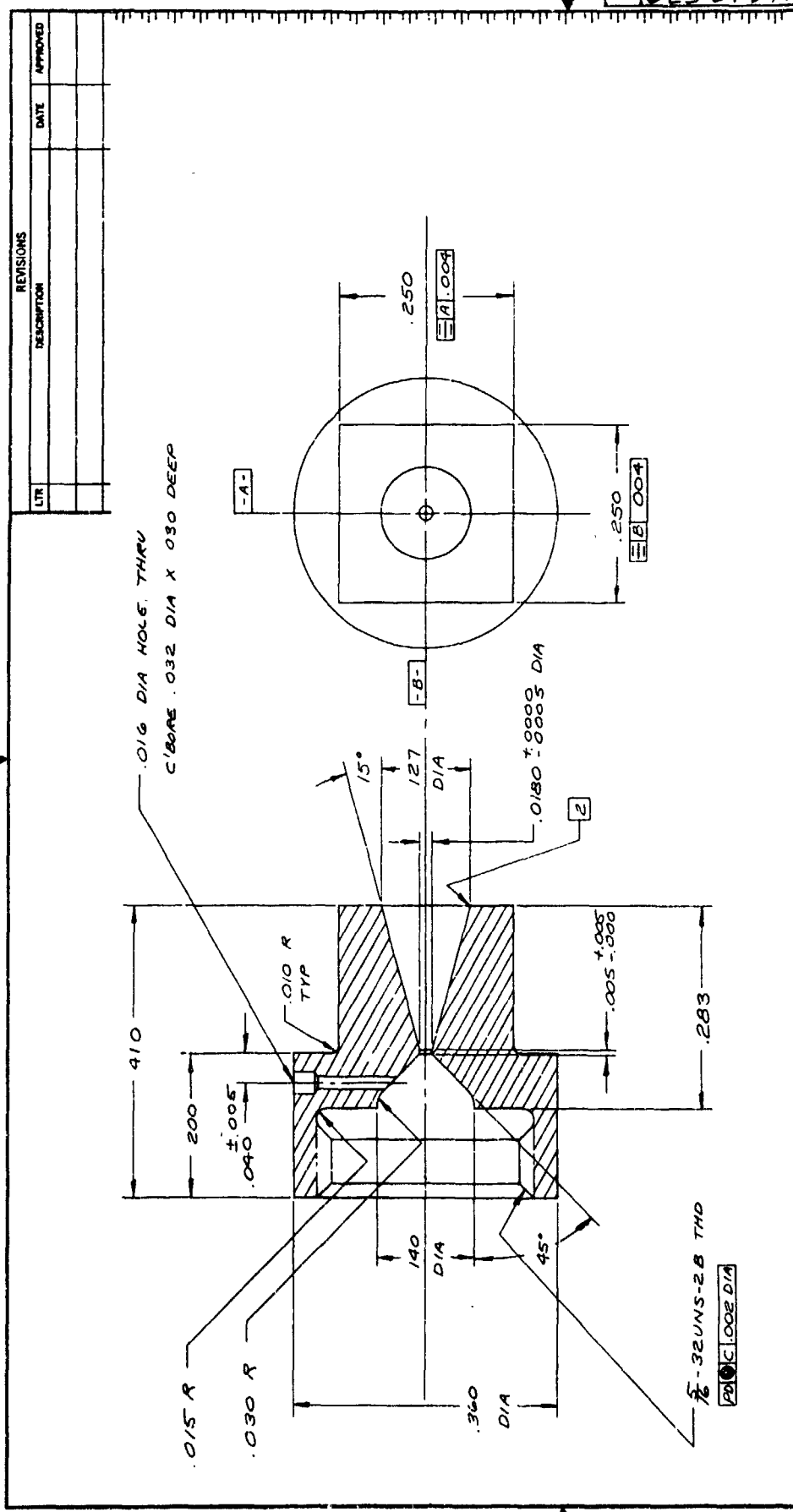








X412578



REVISIONS		DATE		APPROVED	
LTR	DESCRIPTION				

QTY	REQD PER ASSY	CODE	IDENT NO.	PART OR IDENTIFYING NO.	NOZZLE	MATERIAL	ITEM NO.
				- 1	NOZZLE	L-605 (HAYNES 25) BAR	AM15 5753

UNLESS OTHERWISE SPECIFIED		PARTS LIST	
1. DO NOT SCALE DRAWING.	2. INTERPRET PER MIL-STD-113.	CONTRACT NO.	DRAWN G E BEARS 5/1973
3. DIMENSIONS ARE IN INCHES.	4. DIMENSIONS IN PARENTHESES ARE FOR INFORMATION ONLY.	CHECKED	
5. REMOVE BURRS AND SHARP EDGES.	6. DIMENSIONS APPLY BEFORE PLATING OR CONVERSION COATING.	STRUCTURES	
7. DIMENSIONS APPLY AFTER PLATING OR CONVERSION COATING.	8. DIMENSIONS APPLY AFTER PLATING OR CONVERSION COATING.	MATERIAL/PROCESS	
		ENGINEER	
		SUPERVISOR	
		PROJECT	
		OTHER APPROVALS	

USED ON	APPLICATION	NO. 1	NO. 2	NO. 3	NO. 4

APPLICABLE SPECIFICATIONS	FINISH	HEAT TREAT
THE ABOVE THE SYSTEM GROUP SPECIFICATIONS APPLY TO THE DRAWING		

ONE SPACE MARK - REDWOOD BRACK, CALIFORNIA	NOZZLE - MONOPROPELLANT DEMONSTRATION THRUSTER
SIZE	CODE
C 11982	X412578
SCALE	10/1

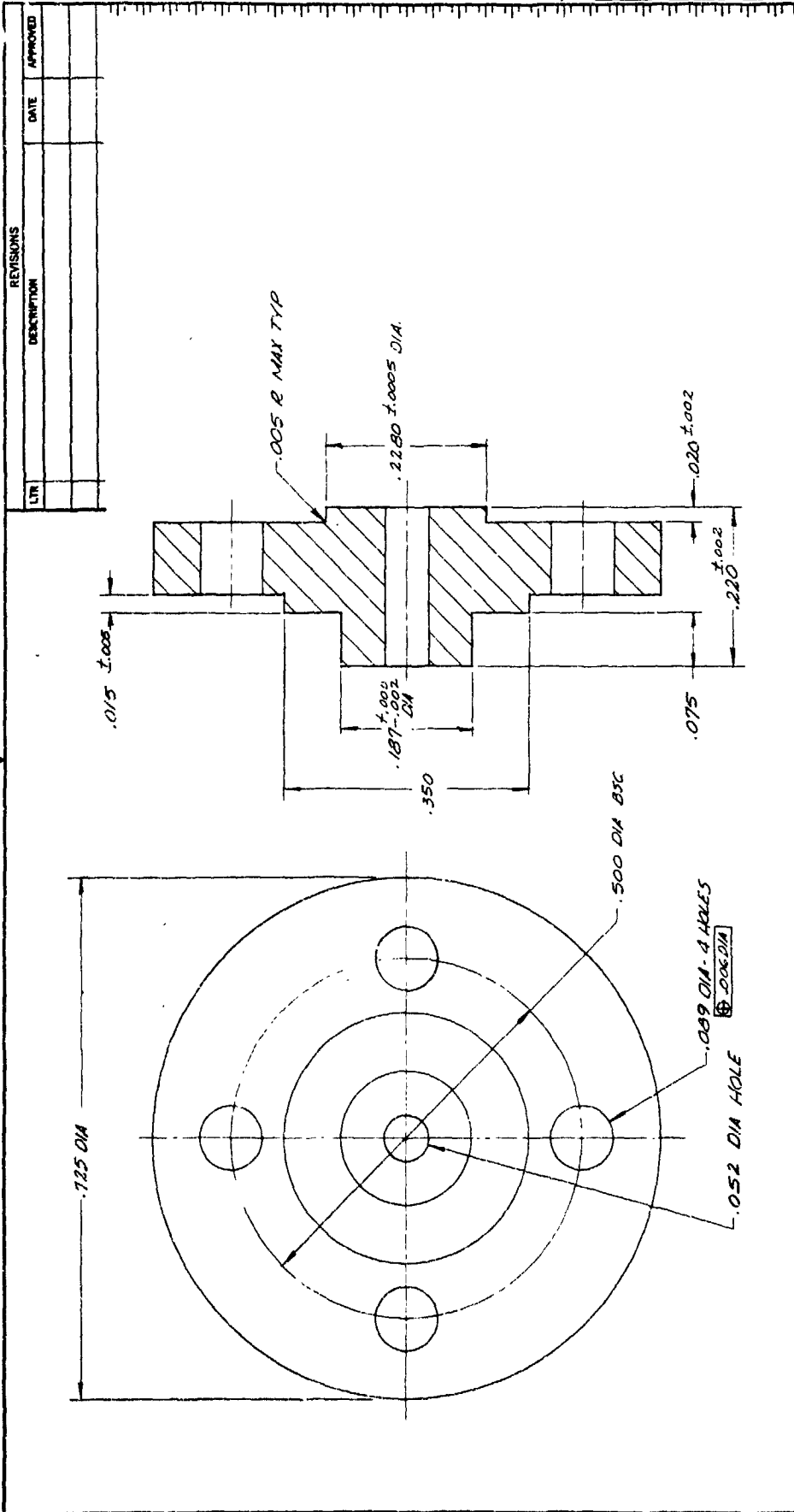
NOTE: UNLESS OTHERWISE SPECIFIED  
 1. IDENTIFY PER PR/2-6-0900  
 2. REMOVE BURR BUT DO NOT BREAK SHARP CORNER.







X409383



REVISIONS		
LTR	DESCRIPTION	DATE APPROVED

CODE IDENT NO.		PART OF IDENTIFYING NO.		MANUFACTURE OR DESCRIPTION		MATERIAL		ITEM NO.	
		-1 SEAL R		TYPE 304 CEES BAR		AMS 5759			
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